

Burning the Heart

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Summary: Between their time breaking up the Black Lotus smuggling ring and facing Moriarty at the pool, Sherlock and John adjust to their new life at 221B. This is the story of how Sherlock discovers the heart Moriarty will threaten to burn.

Burning the Heart

In the last twelve hours later, John had been kidnapped, held ransom and gone without sleep for two days. He did, however, have a ten thousand pound cheque in his pocket and while it was of course made out to Sherlock, he couldn't help but feel proud. They had just returned from revealing the jade hair pin's location to Sebastian and a very stricken secretary.

"Should go to the bank, deposit this," John muttered to himself while waiting for Sherlock to finish showering.

He was so tired. Five minutes before he could have a wash, make some toast, and go to bed. John's head dropped to the table in front of him, pillowed roughly in his hands.

"John." Sherlock's voice broke his stupour.

John mumbled a response. Long fingers wrapped around his wrist and pulled, dislodging his head and jolting him upright.

"Jesus, Sherlock! Normal people need sleep you know."

Sherlock rolled his eyes. "Normal people need many things apparently. It's boring."

"It's not a lot actually. Sleep and food. You can't say that's asking for much."

Sherlock was wearing his suit again. He'd finished showering and

changed his shirt. Or maybe the full suit - John didn't even want to know how many of those he had in his closet. The fact he was dressed instead of lounging in his dressing gown did not bode well for John's plans to sleep the rest of the day.

"I suppose normal people need to 'get off with' dates as well," Sherlock said, quoting John's embarrassing outburst from earlier that evening (yesterday evening? It felt so long ago) at the Chinese circus.

John coloured. "Well yea, that too."

"So you want to ask an international smuggling ring to kindly pause its illicit activities because you need a nice dinner, a nap, and to engage in release of sexual tension." He ticked off the demands on his fingers as he spoke.

"You know what? Forget I said anything."

John rose to his feet. He grabbed his jacket and punched his arms through the sleeves, trying to ignore Sherlock's impassive gaze.

After picking up his gloves and phone, John couldn't avoid looking at his flatmate. "So where are we going?"

Sherlock smiled, one of his smug ones. "We're paying another visit to the friend who got you that ASBO. He's seen one of General Shan's operatives lurking around the graffiti den we investigated."

John looked longingly at the toaster on their way out the door.

General Shan's operative appeared to be unaware of the adventures his leader had engaged in the previous night. He was loitering in the skatepark tunnels next to Waterloo with a can of very familiar yellow spraypaint, holding it as a prop as he waited for orders from someone in the organization. Sherlock and John's covert observation was interrupted when a gun discharged nearby and all hell broke loose.

Youths fearing ASBOs fled alongside hardened criminals, and no one stayed to find the source of disruption. No one except Sherlock. After a twenty-minute chase through London, the perpetrator jumped off a bridge into the Thames, and John physically restrained Sherlock from following. The detective brooded the entire taxi ride back to Baker Street.

"That man was not a member of the Black Lotus Tong," he mused when they arrived in the living room.

"He could have been part of a drug deal gone wrong for all we know," John said. "Ah well, bad timing I suppose."

"No, I said he was not part of the gang, not that he was unrelated."

"How do you know that?"

"Easy. He was aiming at our Black Lotus operative."

"There is _no way _you could know that. We didn't even see him until after he fired the shot."

"No, but we did see the operative. The bullet grazed his arm, not much but enough to send a message. The would-be murderer was standing only metres behind us. He wouldn't have missed from that distance. So the graze was deliberate. But what kind of message? Clear out of London? You're finished here?"

John sighed in exhaustion. "Look, if the smugglers start operating again, we'll hear about it. Then we can find that guy again."

Sherlock jumped to his feet and cursed. "Damn! He survived that jump, and now we've lost his trail. We should have followed him."

"Sherlock, he may have survived but that doesn't mean you would! You could have hit a rock or something in the river."

"Don't be absurd. There aren't any rocks in this part of the Thames, John. It's a main thoroughfare for ship traffic."

"Well at the very least you'd get hypothermia! Now I'm going to take my long overdue shower."

Sherlock wrinkled his nose, which John supposed was his way of agreeing that yes, John did need to take a shower. Charming. It certainly wasn't John's fault he'd been traipsing around London for two days straight.

He took a shower, made toast (Sherlock even ate a piece), and padded to the sofa in his pajamas. One quick glance at the news (it was habit, he had to do it every morning) then he would have a nice, long sleep.

Except Sherlock had settled in his chair and sat contemplating John with his fingers steepled under his chin. His gaze was as inscrutable as always, and it was unnerving to have it directed at John.

"Give it a rest Sherlock and wait until we hear something new about the gang."

Sherlock didn't acknowledge him.

"I'm sure you could ask that Dimmock bloke to keep you updated. Oh Christ we didn't even tell him about the shooting. I suppose he doesn't need to know..."

"John." Sherlock said, leaning back in his chair with his hands resting on its arms. "I would prefer that you don't go on mindless dates with insipid women during our cases."

John paused, startled at the change in topic. When he caught up again, it was only to say "Sarah's not- no, nevermind, we're not talking about this."

"It's detrimental to the work, John. She distracts you from the work, and she gets in my way."

"I seem to recall she pointed out Soo Lin's translation from the gallery."

"That was a stroke of luck on her part. Overall, her presence was deleterious to the case."

John sighed. He had been living at 221B for just over a week, and he thought he might be happy here, but it was time to lay down some rules of his own.

"Look," John said, in a firm but gentle voice he used when advising particularly difficult patients. "We can't predict when a case is going to take us running around London all night. I need to schedule a day, time, and place to meet with women I find attractive. It won't happen all the time, but there may be some overlap. OK?"

Sherlock didn't respond but his eyes glittered. John didn't know what to make of that so he pressed on.

"I already told you that most people have certain needs, and I need to release that tension-

"Which is precisely why I've decided that if you need any of that" - Sherlock waved his arm to indicate the general needs of normal people - "you should come to me."

John gaped at him. "I think lack of sleep is affecting your 'Transport' too now. Think about what you just said."

Sherlock fixed him with an impatient look. "I don't like repeating myself, so do keep up. The next time you feel this so-called need, I'll help and save you the time you spend on awkward and frankly boring dates."

John nearly laughed. In his sleep-deprived state the situation seemed extraordinarily funny.

"I don't think you know what you're suggesting."

Sherlock jumped to his feet in irritation. "Is it any wonder you don't pick up on clues, as you so obviously need everything spelled out for you. You have needs, I have hands, and a mouth for that matter, so let me help."

John's mind had gone blank the moment the moment Sherlock uttered 'mouth'. He felt tense all over, and he noticed his hands were clenched into fists.

"Sherlock, I'm perfectly capable of finding dates and even if I weren't, I don't need a pity wank. That is not normal flatmate behaviour."

"John, think about the work."

"Not good, Sherlock, not good. I'm going to sleep and will forget we ever had this conversation."

John stomped up the stairs with a little more force than was necessary. He certainly couldn't claim his life was boring any more.

Maybe it was time to update his blog.

A/N: Do you think the story has legs? Let me know!

End
file.